

**COLORADO RIVER RECOVERY PROGRAM
FY 2001 ANNUAL PROJECT REPORT**

Project No.: PIP-12B

Lead Agency: Bureau of Reclamation

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Title of Proposal: Coordination of public involvement related to:

Colorado River - Mainstem

The mainstem Colorado River from Rifle, Colorado, to Lake Powell, Utah, supports populations of Colorado pikeminnow, humpback chub, razorback sucker, and bonytail. One focal point of recovery efforts of these endangered fish is the 15-Mile Reach of the Colorado River immediately upstream of the confluence with the Gunnison River, near Grand Junction, Colorado. Capital Improvement projects concerning this 15-Mile Reach include:

(1) **Grand Valley Water Management**—development of a water supply alternative for the 15-Mile Reach of the Colorado River. Included in this project are efficiency improvements to the Government Highline Canal, part of Reclamation's Grand Valley Project, and delivering surplus water from Green Mountain Reservoir to the Grand Valley Power Plant near Palisade, Colorado. These improvements are expected to conserve a significant amount of project water to benefit the habitat of the four endangered fish species in the 15-Mile Reach.

Progress

The 15-Mile Reach Biological Opinion was completed in December 2000 and construction of the 7 canal checks (small dams) in the Government Highline Canal was completed in March 2001. These checks will help the Grand Valley Water Users Association maintain higher water elevations in the canal during the August through October irrigation season when the demand for irrigation water has decreased. This will result in less water being diverted from the Colorado River and that saved water will remain in the river to improve habitat conditions of the endangered fish. The automation part of the check structures is not yet completed.

Construction of a 900-foot bypass pipeline was completed in July 2001. The pipeline will help the Association "fine tune" the canal flow rate before it enters their service area, and work in conjunction with the checks to save river water.

An agreement was reached with the Colorado Division of Parks and Recreation to move forward with construction of the Highline Lake Pumping Plant. Construction is scheduled to begin in the fall 2002.

Completion date

The automation system to monitor and operate the canal checks is scheduled for completion in August 2002.

Construction of the Highline Lake Pumping Plant is scheduled to be completed in August 2003.

Study schedule

Grand Valley Water Management

Initial year: FY93

Final year: FY03

(2) Grand Valley Irrigation Company Fish Screen—Construction of a fish screen in the privately-owned Grand Valley Mainline Canal. This screen is required as part of the 15-Mile Reach Preliminary Biological Opinion.

Progress

A \$2,049,295 million contract was awarded in September 2001 for construction of a stainless steel fish screen in the Grand Valley Mainline Canal.

Completion date

Construction will be completed prior to irrigation season in 2002.

Study schedule

Grand Valley Irrigation Company Fish Screen

Initial year: FY 99

Final year: FY 02

(3) Price-Stubb Diversion Dam (abandoned)— provide fish passage on the Colorado River upstream of the 15-Mile Reach. In April 1999, Reclamation released the draft environmental assessment (EA) for public review and comment. Also in April 99, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) issued a draft EA on an amendment to license a non-Federal hydroelectric power plant which would require use of the Price-Stubb Diversion Dam.

Progress

On September 13, 2001, FERC issued an order approving licensing a non-Federal hydroelectric power plant at the Price-Stubb Diversion Dam. Mr. Eric Jacobson, the FERC licensee, has until January 13, 2002, to begin construction of the project. The project's financial feasibility is in question, and FERC is requiring the licensee to submit a project financing plan for FERC approval prior to any ground disturbance, to ensure financing to complete construction. begun planning the hydropower facility. Mr. Jacobson has to also file a plan for the handling of the endangered fish in the Colorado River as well as report on the current condition of the fish.

Completion date

Completion date for fish passage at the abandoned Price-Stubb Dam is dependent on Mr. Jacobson's actions but is scheduled for April 2003.

Study schedule

Price-Stubb Diversion Dam Passage

Initial year: FY98

Final year: FY03

(4) Grand Valley Project Diversion Dam—Provide fish passage on the Colorado River upstream of the 15-Mile Reach.

Progress

Reclamation is preparing a draft environmental assessment which is scheduled for release for public review in early 2002. To avoid duplication of information, the EA will "tier" off the Grand Valley Irrigation Company's fish passage EA.

Completion date

Completion date for fish passage at the Grand Valley Project Diversion Dam is April 2003.

Study schedule

Grand Valley Project Diversion Dam Passage

Initial year: FY98

Final year: April 03

Colorado River – Gunnison River

(5) Hartland Diversion Dam--Restoring fish passage at the privately-owned Hartland Dam on the Gunnison River east of Delta, Colorado

Progress

The necessity of a fish passage at this diversion dam is being evaluated by the Biology Committee. The project is therefore on hold.

Relationship to RIPRAP: General Recovery Program Support Action Plan

Accomplishments of FY 2001 Tasks and Deliverables, Discussion of Findings and Shortcomings**Tasks**

Gain water user cooperation in construction of the improvements to the Government Highline Canal so late summer flows will be enhanced.

Develop public awareness and support and/or informed consent for Recovery Program activities/projects.

Strategies

Media:

- **Produced and distributed news releases regarding construction of check structures and the Palisade pipeline.
- **News articles appeared in local newspapers about the Recovery Program projects/proposals.—Ongoing

Meetings:

- **Held one-on-one meetings with water users—Ongoing
- **Meet with directly affected interests to discuss proposed projects—Ongoing.
- **Management staff meets with local congressional staff to keep them up-to-date and aware of Recovery Program activities that Reclamation is involved with in the area—Quarterly

Tours:

- **Arranged a tour of Grand Valley Recovery Program completed facilities and proposed fish passages, grow-out ponds, fish screens, habitat restoration areas, etc. Tour was for the Colorado River Energy Distributors Association and included several Washington, D.C., congressional staff -- 08/2001

Other:

- **Worked with I&E Coordinator at the Colorado River Water Users Association annual meeting where we used the Recovery Program exhibit as a draw to talk with attendees about the Recovery Program—12/00; did the same at the annual Colorado Water Workshop meeting 7/ 01. Displayed the Recovery Program exhibit at the local museum for 1½ months 9/01.

Findings and shortcomings

Delays in the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission licensing process have caused significant delays for the fish passage at the Price-Stubb Diversion Dam and credibility has suffered somewhat due to lack of action. However, the general opinion of the Recovery Program seems to be improving for some, especially those who see and understand the benefit to their organization(s).

Recommendations

Fish passage is delayed at the Price-Stubb Diversion Dam and should be kept on public involvement activities until successful completion of a passage.

FY 2001 Budget Status

- A. Funds Provided: \$30,000
- B. Funds Expended: \$30,000
- C. Difference: \$ 0
- D. Percent of the FY 2001 work completed, and projected costs to complete: N/A
- E. Recovery Program funds spent for publication charges: \$ (Printing was charged to the applicable project)

Signed: Jone E. Wright
Submitted by

12/5/01
Date